

## LOWER MERRIMACK RIVER LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### MINUTES May 26, 2005

#### Members:

- ✓ = present
  
- ✓ Bob Robbins (Chair) – Hudson
- ✓ Kathryn Nelson (Vice Chair/ Public Relations) -- Nashua  
George May (Secretary) - Merrimack  
Glenn McKibben (Treasurer) – Litchfield
- ✓ Cynthia Ruonala – Nashua
- ✓ Jim Barnes – Hudson
- ✓ Karen Archambault -- Nashua  
Patrick Tate – Hudson  
Ray Peeples – Litchfield
- ✓ Rick Maddox – Hudson  
Sharon Akers – Merrimack  
Stan Kazlouskas – Hudson
- ✓ Will Jewett – Litchfield

#### Also in attendance:

- ✓ Nick Caggiano, Nashua Park and Recreation Department

Chairman Bob Robbins called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm in the Hunt Room of the Nashua Library. It was noted that a quorum was present. In George's absence, the chair asked Karen to take minutes for the meeting. The chair requested to change the order of the meeting to allow Nick Caggiano the floor at the start of the meeting. No objections were given to doing so.

Nick gave an overview of the Nashua Park and Recreation Department, summarizing its responsibilities as a lead-in to a discussion of the Merrimack River boat ramp off Hills Ferry Road. He indicated that the boat ramp has been in existence for at least 35 years, according to the recollections of the most senior member of Park and Rec staff. It's unknown for how long the ramp has been paved. He indicated that some sources show the location's use as a boat launch dates to the 1740s when there was a ferry located there. He later pointed to a map in the Hunt Room which labels the ferry launch dating to 1739.

Nick described the condition of the boat ramp – that the launch is so steep that the current can carry a car downstream, and he mentioned one instance in the summer of 2004 where a rescue was required for a person stranded in a car so carried away. He also described a stormwater discharge pipe (a concrete pipe) near the ramp, which also causes problems. The ramp area is subject to heavy vandalism and dumping of large household items (mattresses, television sets, etc.). The approach to the ramp is rough – the Street Department regrades it about every 3 months.

Nick described the City's pursuit to have the ramp declared a State boat ramp, thereby placing it under NH Fish and Game's control. The investigation began when Bill Oikle of Hawkeye magazine (a magazine with a focus on fishing, boating, hunting) told Nick of Fish and Game's program where the State repairs State boat ramps. Nick had contact with Richard Tichko of Fish and Game, who expressed an interest in the ramp. Discussions between the City and the State covered such Fish and Game policies that the boat ramp must be open to all the public, open year round, and open 24 hours per day, every day. The main holdup at this point is the railroad crossing –that the crossing must be public and gated. Guilford Transportation has been reluctant so far to do so, contending the crossing is a private one. City's research, on the other hand, supports the opinion that the crossing is a public one. A brief discussion followed of the Beazer East property, adjacent to the boat ramp to the north. Kath mentioned that any

future plans for the Beazer property should include an easement for the existing trails on the property along the river.

The agreement between Nashua and the State for the boat ramp includes a need for formalized parking. Nashua staff would manage day-to-day maintenance of the area but the State would perform any needed repair work. The City would have to come up with the funding for parking improvements, to move the stormwater pipe (to be upstream of the boat ramp), and finish work to 'make the area pretty'. The State has already shown an increased interest in the site – Nick indicated that a Fish and Game vehicle has been seen at the ramp, checking boaters' licenses.

The City could use letters of support at NH Fish and Game for the effort to transfer the boat ramp to State control. The contact information is: Richard J. Tichko, Fisheries Biologist II, NH Fish and Game, 2 Hazen Drive, Concord, NH 03301-6500.

Kath mentioned that she had learned that Nashua's Mayor Bernard Streeter had a meeting scheduled in the near future with Guilford on the proposed rail station in the south end of the City. She had tried to contact the Mayor's office to suggest that the boat ramp rail crossing be considered for discussion as well. Nick indicated that the Mayor is aware of the boat ramp project.

Bob mentioned that the upcoming LMRLAC survey could include information on what Nashua's Park and Rec Department is doing, if Nick was comfortable with that. Nick expressed no objections.

Nick mentioned that Nashua has had a good track record with Rep. Bass and Sen. Gregg in the past, and that they could be helpful in gathering support.

Kath and Bob both indicated that the LAC should draft some letters on the boat ramp, but further specifics were not discussed.

Nick requested that he be cc'd on any correspondence, and indicated that e-mail is generally the best way to reach him when needed. Nick also mentioned that the kiosk at the boat ramp has been repaired, and that brochures or information on the river could be left there. He also suggested that brochures could be left at the Nashua Park and Rec offices at Greeley Park – that people are in there often signing up children for sports, etc.

The members thanked Nick for his informative presentation, and proceeded to other business.

Minutes from the last meeting were approved as printed.

Members were reminded of the LID for cold climates workshop being held at NRPC on Tuesday May 31. Kath and Karen indicated that they may be attending.

Correspondence:

Sharon Akers submitted her resignation this week from the LAC, citing her pending move out of Merrimack and work schedule conflicts. In her letter she praised the work of the LAC.

### **Old Business:**

Bylaws: Karen read the motion from the last meeting, to change the bylaws (that Article 7f of the bylaws be changed to sending the final approved minutes to the towns within six days). Rick asked whether this change meets the requirements of Chapter 91. Kath replied that Angie had given the opinion that it did. Discussion followed on whether the minutes need to be public within a specified time frame after the meeting, how much that pertained to the LAC as an advisory body. The point was made that draft minutes are sent to members within 6 days of the meeting; that the public could access that information by contacting NRPC or a member.

Cynthia excused herself from the room briefly. When the question was called, the motion to amend the bylaws was defeated, 0-6. Rick took an action to get a copy of Chapter 91-A for the LAC to use for future reference.

The meeting then turned to a discussion of how to contact each town with the LAC minutes. Kath and Karen concurred that the contact for Nashua would be Rick Sawyer. Karen took the action to e-mail George with Rick's contact information.

The contact name for Hudson is probably John Cashell (sp), town planner. Jim took the action to e-mail George with contact info for Hudson.

Cynthia returned to the meeting.

Bob took the action to e-mail Ray Peeples to get a contact for Litchfield.

Bob asked that Angie provide the contact information for Merrimack.

Management Plan/Outreach Program: The postcard to river abutters announcing the survey was discussed. Bob passed around recommended wording from George; Kath added a clause to it. Bob indicated he had some pictures from Angie, but the first choice of the LAC would be Glenn's picture of the bald eagles as shown at the last meeting. The second choice would be one of Angie's river pictures from the presentation.

A discussion followed on whether a vote was needed to spend the money for the postcard design. It was decided that no vote was required yet as no money was being spent yet.

The members also discussed to whom the surveys would be sent, and reiterated that the previous decision was to send it to river abutters and those immediately across the street (from the river)

Bob mentioned that the LAC should maintain an e-mail list of survey responders, as a list of interested people to contact in future as a base to gather support on river-related issues.

Rick asked whether the surveys would be ready for Old Home Day in Hudson in August. He mentioned that surveys could be made available there if people want to fill it out.

Kath mentioned that she is currently helping NRPC with a Souhegan survey, and that our survey can probably be based on that one. She indicated that our survey contents will be available for review at the June meeting, and will be e-mailed ahead of the meeting.

The plan to rotate meetings among the member towns was discussed. Will presented his plan, based on each member town taking three meetings a year, equally spaced. The proposed schedule is as follows:

Nashua: May, September, January

Hudson: June, October, February

Litchfield: July, November, March

Merrimack: August, December, April

Kath requested that the responsible person from each town provide all members with the location of the meeting in their town, and directions to get there.

The Nashua location will be the Hunt Room at the Nashua Public Library. Kath will schedule the room.

Rick took responsibility for lining up a location in Hudson, and will notify members.

Will has a room lined up at the Town Office in Litchfield. Directions to that: follow sign for Police Station off 3A. Go through the front door and straight back.

Bob asked that the minutes reflect for George to take an action to line up a location in Merrimack.

Members held a brief discussion on whether to sign up the Hunt Room as a backup, but decided against that to avoid ill feelings with the library (for doublebooking). The rotating schedule for meetings will be evaluated after an initial trial period.

Bob mentioned that the LAC has not yet seen the money from the Citigroup grant.

Nomination Committee: Kath presented a written copy of a draft slate, which consists of the current officers. She asked that interested members put their name down, or nominate others (preferably, with that person's knowledge and consent). Discussion of separating the roles of

Vice President and Public Relations followed; Cynthia agreed to run for the position of Public Relations.

It was suggested that Hawkeye Magazine be added to our contacts list for Public Relations. Kath showed a copy of a column in this week's Broadcaster about fish releases in the Merrimack and the Pemigewasset. The author was Bill Biswanger, Media News columnist. Cynthia took the article to add the author to the PR contacts list.

A brief discussion followed on the need for a contact at the Hudson-Litchfield News – that articles had been submitted but not run. Rick took the action to contact Glen Lathrop at the paper.

### **New Business:**

Kath handed a copy of the original management plan to Cynthia for her to review. Kath will round up another copy for Karen to review.

Bob summarized a discussion with Angie on the field trips she's required to schedule for the river. Angie had e-mailed an outline of a schedule to LAC members. Bob recommended that the LAC request Angie 'tie down' the field trip schedule with more specifics as to times. Members should e-mail with suggestions of places, modes of transportation, etc. Kath provided an update on the potential pontoon boat trip. She has contacted the pontoon boat owner (Tom Burke) with a list of LAC meeting dates through September, in order to hold the boat trip on the same day as a meeting (as was done last summer). A discussion followed as to the best route for this year's trip. Bob suggested the route go not as far north this year, citing concerns about the water's depth. Rick asked about a boat launch in Tyngsborough (near the Tyngsborough bridge). Kath indicated she would keep the LAC informed on status of scheduling the boat trip.

### **Local Updates:**

Kath read excerpts from a letter by Amy Clark at DES about the Pine Creek Village project in Litchfield.

Kath reminded Karen of the Keyspan project (pipe in river) and asked for Karen to notify the LAC when the Nashua Conservation Commission has its site walk for this project.

Rick mentioned that Hudson is redoing its checklist – included in the rework is a comment that if the project is adjacent to the river, the project must go to the LAC.

Next meeting will be in Hudson. Rick will line up a meeting place and will notify the LAC of the room and directions to it.

Rick supplied a new e-mail address for contacting him: bos@rmaddox.net.

Meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Archambault  
Substitute Secretary